ISABELLA

1507/1280

ISABELLA;

OR THE

FATAL MARRIAGE:

A

TRAGEDY.

ALTERED FROM

THO. SOUTHERN.

Pellex ego facta mariti. OVID.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. ROBERTSON;

M,DCC,LXXIV.

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Tedet eos legisse quibus

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THOUGH the mixed drama of the laſt age, called *Tragi-Comedy*, has been generally condemned by the critics, and perhaps, not without reaſon; yet it has been found to ſucceed on the ſtage: both the comic and tragic ſcenes have been applauded by the audience, without any particular exceptions. Nor has it been obſerved, that the effect of either was leſs forcible, than it would have been, if they had not ſucceeded each other in the entertainment of the ſame night. The tragic part of this play has been always eſteemed extremely natural and intereſting; and it would probably, like ſome others, have produced its full effect, notwithſtanding the intervention of the comic ſcenes that are mixed with it: the Editor, therefore, would not have thought of removing them, if they had not been exceptionable in themſelves, not only as indelicate, but as immoral: for this reaſon, he has ſuffered ſo much of the character of the *Porter* and the *Nurſe* to remain as is not liable to this objection. He is, however, to account, not only for what he has taken away, but for what he has added. It will eaſily be comprehended, that the leaving out ſomething, made it abſolutely neceſſary that ſomething ſhould be ſupplied; and the public will be the more eaſily reconciled to this neceſſity, when they are acquainted that the additions are very inconſiderable, and that the Editor has done his utmoſt to render them of a piece with the reſt. Several lines of the original, particularly in the part of Iſabella, are printed, though they are omitted in the repreſentation. Many things pleaſe in the reading, which may have little or no effect upon the ſtage. When the paſſions are violent, and the ſpeeches long, the performers muſt either ſpare their powers, or ſhorten their ſpeeches. Mrs Cibber choſe the latter; by which ſhe has been able to exert that force and expreſſion which has been ſo ſtrongly felt, and ſo ſincerely applauded.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

Count BALDWIN, father to Biron and Carlos.

BIRON, married to Iſabella, ſuppos'd dead.

CARLOS, his younger brother.

VILLEROY, in love with Iſabella, marries her.

SAMPSON, porter to Count Baldwin.

A CHILD of Iſabella's, by Biron.

BELLFORD, a friend of Biron's.

PEDRO, a ſervant to Carlos.

ISABELLA, married to Biron and Villeroy.

Nurſe to Biron.

Officers, Servants, Men and Women.

The SCENE, *BRUSSELS.*

30 MAY 63

ISABELLA;

OR THE

FATAL MARRIAGE.

ACT I.

SCENE, *Before Count* Baldwin's *houſe.*

Enter VILLEROY *and* CARLOS.

CARLOS.

THIS conſtancy of yours will eſtabliſh an immortal reputation among the women.

Vil. If it would eſtabliſh me with Iſabella——

Car. Follow her, follow her; Troy town was won at laſt.

Vil. I have follow'd her theſe ſeven years, and now but live in hopes.

Car. But live in hopes! why, hope is the ready road, the lover's baiting-place, and, for aught you know, but one ſtage ſhort of the poſſeſſion of your miſtreſs.

Vil. But my hopes, I fear, are more of my own making, than hers; and proceed rather from my wiſhes, than any encouragement ſhe has given me.

Car. That I can't tell: the ſex is very various: there are no certain meaſures to be preſcrib'd, or follow'd, in making our approaches to the women. All

that we have to do, I think, is to attempt 'em in the weakeſt part: preſs 'em but hard, and they will all fall under the neceſſity of a ſurrender at laſt. That favour comes at once, and ſometimes when we leaſt expect it.

Vil. I ſhall be glad to find it ſo.

Car. You will find it ſo. Every place is to be taken that is not to be reliev'd: ſhe muſt comply.

Vil. I'm going to viſit her.

Car. What intereſt a brother-in-law can have with her, depend upon.———

Vil. I know your intereſt, and I thank you.

Car. You are prevented; ſee the mourner comes:
She weeps, as ſeven years were ſeven hours;
So freſh, unfading is the memory
Of my poor brother Biron's death:
I leave you to your opportunity. [*Exit* Vil.
Tho' I have ta'en care to root her from our houſe,
I would tranſplant her into Villeroy's——
There is an evil fate that waits upon her,
To which, I wiſh him wedded——only him:
His upſtart family, with haughty brow,
(Tho' Villeroy and myſelf are ſeeming friends)
Looks down upon our houſe; his ſiſter too,
Whoſe hand I aſk'd, and was with ſcorn refus'd,
Lives in my breaſt, and fires me to revenge.——
They bend this way——
Perhaps, at laſt, ſhe ſeeks my father's doors;
They ſhall be ſhut, and he prepar'd to give
The beggar and her brat a cold reception.
That boy's an adder in my path——they come,
I'll ſtand a-part, and watch their motions. [*Retires.*

Enter VILLEROY, *with* ISABELLA, *and her little ſon.*

Iſa. Why do you follow me? you know, I am
A bankrupt every way; too far engag'd
Ever to make return; I own you've been
More than a brother to me, been my friend;
And at a time when friends are found no more,
A friend to my misfortunes.

Vil. I muſt be

Always

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Always your friend.

Iſa. I have known, and found you
Truly my friend; and wou'd I cou'd be yours;
But the unfortunate cannot be friends:
Fate watches the firſt motion of the ſoul,
To diſappoint our wiſhes; if we pray
For bleſſings, they prove curſes in the end,
To ruin all about us. Pray be gone,
Take warning and be happy.

Vil. Happineſs!
There's none for me, without you: riches, name,
Health, fame, diſtinction, place, and quality,
Are the incumbrances of groaning life,
To make it but more tedious, without you;
What ſerve the goods of fortune for? to raiſe
My hopes, that you at laſt will ſhare 'em with me.
Long life itſelf, the univerſal prayer,
And heav'n's reward of well-deſervers here,
Wou'd prove a plague to me; to ſee you always,
And never ſee you mine! ſtill to deſire,
And never to enjoy!

Iſa. I muſt not hear you.

Vil. Thus, at this awful diſtance, I have ſerv'd
A ſeven years bondage—do I call it bondage,
When I can never wiſh to be redeem'd?
No, let me rather linger out a life
Of expectation, that you may be mine,
Than be reſtor'd to the indifference
Of ſeeing you, without this pleaſing pain:
I've loſt myſelf, and never would be found,
But in theſe arms.

Iſa. O, I have heard all this!
—But muſt no more—the charmer is no more?
My bury'd huſband riſes in the face
Of my dear boy, and chides me for my ſtay:
Can'ſt thou forgive me, child?

Child. Why, have you done a fault? you cry as if you had: indeed now, I have done nothing to offend you: but if you kiſs me, and look ſo very ſad upon me, I ſhall cry too.

Iſa. My little angel, no, you muſt not cry;
Sorrow will overtake thy ſteps too ſoon;

I ſhould not haſten it.

Vil. What can I ſay!
The arguments that make againſt my hopes
Prevail upon my heart, and fix me more;
Thoſe pious tears you hourly throw away
Upon the grave, have all their quick'ning charms,
And more engage my love to make you mine:
When yet a virgin, free, and undiſpos'd,
I lov'd, but ſaw you only with my eyes;
I cou'd not reach the beauties of your ſoul:
I have ſince liv'd in contemplation,
And long experience of your growing goodneſs:
What then was paſſion, is my judgment now,
Thro' all the ſeveral changes of your life,
Confirm'd and ſettled in adoring you.

Iſa. Nay, then I muſt be gone: If you're my friend,
If you regard my little intereſt;
No more of this; you ſee, I grant you all
That friendſhip will allow: be ſtill my friend;
That's all I can receive, or have to give:
I'm going to my father: he needs not an excuſe
To uſe me ill, pray leave me to the trial.

Vil. I'm only born to be what you wou'd have me;
The creature of your power, and muſt obey;
In every thing obey you. I am going;
But all good fortune go along with you. [*Exit.*

Iſa. I ſhall need all your wiſhes —— [*Knocks.*
Lock'd! and faſt!
Where is the charity that us'd to ſtand,
In our forefathers hoſpitable days,
At great men's doors, ready for our wants,
Like the good angel of the family,
With open arms taking the needy in,
To feed and clothe, to comfort and relieve 'em?
Now ev'n their gates are ſhut againſt their poor.
[*She knocks again.*

Enter SAMPSON *to her.*

Samp. Well, what's to do now, I trow? you knock as loud as if you were invited; and that's more than I hear of: but I can tell you, you may look twice about for a welcome

welcome in a great man's family before you find it, unleſs you bring it along with you.

Iſa. I hope I bring my welcome along with me: Is your lord at home?

Samp. My lord at home!

Iſa. Count Baldwin lives here ſtill?

Samp. Ay, ay, Count Baldwin does live here: and I am his porter: but what's that to the purpoſe, good woman, of my lord's being at home?

Iſa. Why don't you know me, friend?

Samp. Not I, not I, miſtreſs; I may have ſeen you before, or ſo: but men of employment muſt forget their acquaintance; eſpecially ſuch as we are never to be the better for.

[*Going to ſhut the door, Nurſe enters, having overheard him.*

Nurſe. Handſomer words would become you, and mend your manners, Sampſon: do you know who you prate to?

Iſa. I'm glad you know me, Nurſe.

Nurſe. Marry, heav'n forbid, madam, that I ſhould ever forget you, or my little jewel: pray go in—[Iſabella *goes in with her child.*] — Now my bleſſing go along with you, wherever you go, or whatever you are about. Fie, Sampſon, how could'ſt thou be ſuch a Saracen? a Turk would have been a better Chriſtian, than to have done ſo barbarouſly by ſo good a lady.

Samp. Why look you, Nurſe, I know you of old: by your good-will you would have a finger in every body's pie, but mark the end on't: If I am call'd to account about it, I know what I have to ſay.

Nurſe. Marry come up here: ſay your pleaſure, and ſpare not. Refuſe his eldeſt ſon's widow, and poor child, the comfort of ſeeing him? ſhe does not trouble him ſo often.

Samp. Not that I am againſt it, Nurſe; but we are but ſervants, you know; we muſt have no likings, but our lord's; and muſt do as we are ordered.

Nurſe. Nay, that's true, Sampſon.

Samp. Beſides, what I did was all for the beſt: I have no ill-will to the young lady, as a body may ſay, upon my own account; only that I hear ſhe is poor; and

indeed I naturally hate your decay'd gentry: they expect as much waiting upon as when they had money in their pockets, and were able to conſider us for the trouble.

Nurſe. Why, that is a grievance indeed in great families; where the gifts at good times are better than the wages: it would do well to be reform'd.

Samp. But what is the buſineſs, Nurſe? you have been in the family before I came into the world; what's the reaſon, pray, that this daughter-in-law, who has ſo good a report in every body's mouth, is ſo little ſet by, by my lord?

Nurſe. Why, I'll tell you, Sampſon; more nor leſs: I'll tell the truth, that's my way, you know, without adding or diminiſhing.

Samp. Ay, marry, Nurſe.

Nurſe. My lord's eldeſt ſon, Biron by name, the ſon of his boſom, and the ſon that he would have lov'd beſt, if he had as many as king Pyramus of Troy.

Samp. How! king Pyramus of Troy! why, how many had he?

Nurſe. Why the ballad ſings he had fifty ſons: but no matter for that. This Biron, as I was ſaying, was a lovely, ſweet gentleman, and indeed, no body could blame his father for loving him: he was a ſon for the king of Spain; God bleſs him; for I was his nurſe. But now, I come to the point, Sampſon: this Biron, without aſking the advice of his friends, hand over head, as young men will have their vagaries, not having the fear of his father before his eyes, as I may ſay, wilfully marries this Iſabella.

Samp. How, wilfully! he ſhould have had her conſent, methinks.

Nurſe. No, wilfully marries her; and which was worſe, after ſhe had ſettled all her fortune upon a nunnery, which ſhe broke out of to run away with him. They ſay they had the church's forgiveneſs, but I had rather it had been his father's.

Samp. Why, in good truth, theſe nunneries, I ſee no good they do. I think the young lady was in the right, to run away from a nunnery: and I think our young maſter

maſter was not in the wrong, but in marrying without a portion.

Nurſe. That was the quarrel, I believe, Sampſon. Upon this my old lord would never ſee him; diſinherited him; took his younger brother Carlos into favour, whom he never car'd for before; and at laſt fore'd Biron to go to the ſiege of Candy, where he was killed.

Samp. Alack-a-day, poor gentleman.——

Nurſe. For which my old lord hates her, as if ſhe had been the cauſe of his going thither.

Samp. Alas, alas, poor lady, ſhe has ſuffer'd for't: ſhe has liv'd a great while a widow.

Nurſe. A great while, indeed, for a young woman, Sampſon.

Samp. Gad ſo! here they come; I won't venture to be ſeen.

Enter Count BALDWIN, *followed by* ISABELLA *and her child.*

C. *Bald.* Whoever of your friends directed you,
Miſguided, and abus'd you—there's your way;
I can afford to ſhew you out again;
What could you expect from me?

Iſa. Oh, I have nothing to expect on earth!
But miſery is very apt to talk:
I thought I might be heard.

C. *Bald.* What can you ſay?
Is there in eloquence, can there be in words
A recompenſing pow'r, a remedy,
A reparation of the injuries,
The great calamities, that you have brought
On me and mine? you have deſtroy'd thoſe hopes
I fondly rais'd, thro' my declining life,
To reſt my age upon; and moſt undone me.

Iſa. I have undone myſelf too.

C. *Bald.* Speak again:
Say ſtill you are undone, and I will hear you,
With pleaſure hear you.

Iſa. Would my ruin pleaſe you?

C. *Bald.* Beyond all other pleaſures.

Iſa. Then thou art pleas'd—for I am moſt undone.

C. *Bald.*

C. *Bald.* I pray'd but for revenge, and heav'n has heard,
And sent it to my wishes: these grey hairs
Would have gone down in sorrow to the grave,
Which you have dug for me, without the thought,
The thought of leaving you more wretched here.

Isa. Indeed I am most wretched—when I lost
My husband——

C. *Bald.* Wou'd he had never been;
Or never had been yours.

Isa. I then believ'd
The measure of my sorrow then was full:
But every moment of my growing days
Makes room for woes, and adds 'em to the sum.
I lost with Biron all the joys of life:
But now its last supporting means are gone,
All the kind helps that heav'n in pity tais'd,
In charitable pity to our wants,
At last have left us: now bereft of all,
But this last trial of a cruel father,
To save us both from sinking. O my child!
Kneel with me, knock at nature in his heart:
Let the resemblance of a once lov'd son
Speak in this little one, who never wrong'd you,
And plead the fatherless and widow's cause.
Oh, if you ever hope to be forgiven,
As you will need to be forgiven too,
Forget our faults, that heav'n may pardon yours.

C. *Bald.* How dare you mention heaven, call to mind
Your perjur'd vows; your plighted, broken faith,
To heav'n, and all things holy: were you not
Devoted, wedded to a life recluse,
The sacred habit on, profess'd and sworn
A votary for ever? can you think
The sacrilegious wretch, that robs the shrine,
Is thunder proof?

Isa. There, there began my woes:
Let women all take warning at my fate;
Never resolve, or think they can be safe,
Within the reach and tongue of tempting men.
Oh! had I never seen my Biron's face,
Had he not tempted me, I had not fall'n,

But

But ſtill continu'd innocent, and free
Of a bad world, which only he had pow'r
To reconcile, and make me try again.

C. *Bald.* Your own inconſtancy, your graceleſs thoughts,
Debauch'd and reconcil'd you to the world:
He had no hand to bring you back again,
But what you gave him. Circe, you prevail'd
Upon his honeſt mind, transforming him
From virtue, and himſelf, into what ſhapes
You had occaſion for; and what he did
Was firſt inſpir'd by you. A cloyſter was
Too narrow for the work you had in hand:
Your buſineſs was more general; the whole world
To be the ſcene: therefore you ſpread your charms
To catch his ſoul, to be the inſtrument,
The wicked inſtrument of your curſed flight.
Not that you valu'd him; for any one,
Who could have ſerv'd that turn, had been as welcome.

Iſa. O! I have ſins to heav'n, but none to him.

C. *Bald.* Had my wretched ſon
Married a beggar's baſtard: taken her
Out of her rags, and made her of my blood,
The miſchief might have ceas'd, and ended there;
But bringing you into a family
Entails a curſe upon the name, and houſe,
That takes you in: the only part of me
That did receive you, periſh'd for his crime.
'Tis a defiance to offended heav'n,
Barely to pity you: your ſins purſue you:
The heavieſt judgments that can fall upon you,
Are your juſt lot, and but prepare your doom:
Expect 'em, and deſpair——Sirrah, rogue,
How durſt thou diſobey me! [*To the porter.*

Iſa. Not for myſelf, for I am paſt the hopes
Of being heard—but for this innocent——
And then I never will diſturb you more.

C. *Bald.* I almoſt pity the unhappy child:
But being yours——

Iſa. Look on him as your ſon's;
And let his part in him anſwer for mine.

O ſave,

O ſave, defend him, ſave him from the wrongs
That fall upon the poor.

C. *Bald.* It touches me——
And I will ſave him——but to keep him ſafe;
Never come near him more.

Iſa. What! take him from me!
No, we muſt never part: 'tis the laſt hold
Of comfort I have left, and when he fails,
All goes along with him: O! could you be
The tyrant to divorce life from my life?
I live but in my child.
No, let me pray in vain, and beg my bread
From door to door, to feed his daily wants,
Rather than always loſe him.

C. *Bald.* Then have your child, and feed him with your prayers.
You, raſcal, ſlave; what do I keep you for?
How came this woman in?

Samp. Why indeed, my lord, I did as good as tell her before my thoughts upon the matter——

C. *Bald.* Did you ſo, ſir? now then tell her mine:
Tell her I ſent you to her. [*Thruſts him towards her.*
There's one more to provide for.

Samp. Good my lord, what I did was in perfect obedience to the old nurſe there: I told her what it would come to.

C. *Bald.* What! this was a plot upon me. And you too, Beldam, were you in the conſpiracy? be gone; go all together: I have provided you an equipage, now ſet up when you pleaſe. She's old enough to do you ſervice: I have none for her. The wide world lies before you: be gone, take any road but this to beg or ſtarve in—I ſhall be glad to hear of you: but never, never ſee me more. [*He drives 'em off before him.*

Iſa. Then Heav'n have mercy on me!

[*Exit with her child, follow'd by* Sampſon *and the* Nurſe.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE *continues.*

Enter VILLEROY *and* CARLOS *meeting.*

VILLEROY.

MY friend, I fear to ask——but Iſabella——
The lovely widow's tears, her orphan's cries,
Thy father muſt feel for them——No, I read,
I read their cold reception in thine eyes——
Thou pitieſt them—tho' Baldwin—but I ſpare him
For Carlos' ſake, thou art no ſon of his.
There needs not this to endear thee more to me.

[*Embraces him.*

Car. My Villeroy, the fatherleſs, the widow,
Are terms not underſtood within theſe gates—
You muſt forgive him; ſir, he thinks this woman
Is Biron's fate, that hurried him to death—
I muſt not think on't, leſt my friendſhip ſtagger,
My friend's, my ſiſter's, mutual advantage
Have reconcil'd my boſom to its taſk.

Vil. Advantage! think not I intend to raiſe
An intereſt from Iſabella's wrongs.
Your father may have intereſted ends
In her undoing; but my heart has none.
Her happineſs muſt be my intereſt,
And that I would reſtore.

Car. Why ſo I mean.
Theſe hardſhips that my father lays upon her,
I'm ſorry for: and wiſh I could prevent:
But he will have his way.

Since there was nothing to be hop'd from her proſperity, the change of her fortune may alter the condition of her thoughts, and make at laſt for you.

Vil. She is above her fortune.

Car. Try her again. Women commonly love according to the circumſtances they are in.

Vil.

Vil. Common women may.

Car. Since you are not acceſſary to the injuſtice, you may be perſuaded to take the advantage of other people's crimes.

Vil. I muſt deſpiſe all thoſe advantages,
That indirectly can advance my love.
No, tho' I live but in the hopes of her,
And languiſh for th' enjoyment of thoſe hopes;
I'd rather pine in a conſuming want
Of what I wiſh, than have the bleſſing mine,
From any reaſon, but conſenting love.
Oh! let me never have it to remember;
I could betray her, coldly to comply:
When a clear, generous choice beſtows her on me,
I know to value the unequal'd gift:
I would not have it, but to value it.

Car. Take your own way: remember, what I offer'd came from a friend.

Vil. I underſtand it ſo. I'll ſerve her for herſelf, without the thought of a reward. [*Exit.*

Car. Agree that point between you. If you marry her any way, you do my buſineſs.
I know him—what his generous ſoul intends,
Ripens my plots—I'll firſt to Iſabella———
I muſt keep up appearances with her too. [*Exit.*

SCENE, Iſabella's *houſe.*

Enter ISABELLA *and* NURSE: ISABELLA's *little Son at play upon the floor.*

Iſa. Sooner, or later, all things paſs away,
And are no more: the beggar and the king,
With equal ſteps tread forward to their end:
Tho' they appear of different natures now,
They meet at laſt; the reconciling grave
Swallows diſtinction firſt, that made us foes,
Then all alike lie down in peace together.
When will that hour of peace arrive for me!
In heav'n I ſhall find it—not in heav'n,
If my old tyrant father can diſpoſe

Of things above—but there his intereſt
May be as poor as mine, and want a friend
As much as I do here. [*Weeping.*

Nurſe. Good Madam, be comforted.

Iſa. Do I deſerve to be this out-caſt wretch?
Abandon'd thus, and loſt? but 'tis my lot,
The will of heav'n, and I muſt not complain:
I will not for myſelf: let me bear all
The violence of your wrath; but ſpare my child:
Let not my ſins be viſited on him;
They are, they muſt, a general ruin falls
On every thing about me: thou art loſt,
Poor nurſe, by being near me.

Nurſe. I can work, or beg, to do you ſervice.

Iſa. Could I forget
What I have been, I might the better bear
What I am deſtin'd to: I'm not the firſt
That have been wretched; but to think how much
I have been happier!—wild, hurrying thoughts,
Start every way from my diſtracted ſoul,
To find out hope, and only meet deſpair.
What anſwer have I?

Enter SAMPSON.

Samp. Why, truly, very little to the purpoſe: like a Jew, as he is, he ſays you have had more already than the jewels are worth: he wiſhes you would rather think of redeeming 'em, than expect any more money upon 'em. [*Exit* Sampſon.

Iſa. 'Tis very well—
So:—poverty at home, and debts abroad!
My preſent fortune bad; my hopes yet worſe!
What will become of me?
This ring is all I have left of value now:
'Twas given me by my huſband: his firſt gift
Upon our marriage: I've always kept it,
With my beſt care, the treaſure next my life;
And now but part with it, to ſupport life;
Which only can be dearer. Take it, nurſe,
'Twill ſtop the cries of hunger for a time;
Provide us bread, and bring a ſhort reprieve,

To put off the bad day of beggary.
That will come on too ſoon. Take care of it:
Manage it, as the laſt remaining friend
That would relieve us. [*Exit* Nurſe] Heav'n can only tell
Where we ſhall find another——My dear boy!
The labour of his birth was lighter to me
Than of my fondneſs now; my fears for him
Are more, than in that hour of hovering death,
They could be for myſelf——He minds me not,
His little ſports have taken up his thoughts:
O may they never feel the pangs of mine.
Thinking will make me mad: why muſt I think,
When no thought brings me comfort!

Nurſe *returns.*

Nurſe. O Madam! you are utterly ruin'd and undone, your creditors of all kinds are come in upon you: they have muſter'd up a regiment of rogues, that are come to plunder your houſe, and ſeize upon all you have in the world; they are below: what will you do, Madam?

Iſa. Do! nothing; no, for I am born to ſuffer.

Enter CARLOS *to her.*

Car. O ſiſter! can I call you by that name,
And be the ſon of this inhuman man,
Inveterate to your ruin? do not think
I am a-kin to his barabrity:
I muſt abhor my father's uſage of you.
And from my bleeding honeſt heart, muſt pity,
Pity your loſt condition: can you think
Of any way that I may ſerve you in?
But what enrages moſt my ſenſe of grief,
My ſorrow for your wrongs, is, that my father,
Fore-knowing well the ſtorm that was to fall,
Has order'd me not to appear for you.

Iſa. I thank your pity: my poor huſband fell
For diſobeying him: do not you ſtay
To venture his diſpleaſure too for me.

Car. You muſt reſolve on ſomething. [*Exit.*

Iſa.

Iſa. Let my fate
Determine for me; I ſhall be prepar'd,
The worſt that can befal me, is to die;
When once it comes to that, it matters not
Which way 'tis brought about, whether I ſtarve,
Or hang, or drown, the end is ſtill the ſame;
Plagues, poiſon, famine, are but ſeveral names
Of the ſame thing, and all conclude in death.
——But ſudden death! O for a ſudden death,
To cheat my perſecutors of their hopes,
Th' expected pleaſure of beholding me
Long in my pains, ling'ring in miſery.
It will not be; that is deny'd me too.
Hark, they are coming; let the torrent roar;
It can but overwhelm me in its fall;
And life and death are now alike to me.

[*Exeunt, the* Nurſe *leading the* Child.

SCENE *opens, and ſhews* CARLOS *and* VILLEROY *with the officers.*

Vil. No farther violence——
The debt in all is but four thouſand crowns;
Were it ten times the ſum, I think you know
My fortune very well can anſwer it.
You have my word for this; I'll ſee you paid.
Off. That's as much as we can deſire: ſo we have the money, no matter whence it comes.
Vil. To-morrow you ſhall have it.
Car. Thus far all's well——

Enter ISABELLA, *and* Nurſe *with the* child.

And now my ſiſter comes to crown the work. [*Aſide.*
Iſa. Where are theſe rav'ning blood-hounds, that purſue
In a full cry, gaping to ſwallow me?
I meet your rage, and come to be devour'd;
Say, which way are you to diſpoſe of me,
To dungeons, darkneſs, death?
Car. Have patience,
Iſa. Patience!

Off. You'll excuſe us, we are but in our office;
Debts muſt be paid.
Iſa. My death will pay you all. [*Diſtractedly.*
Off. While there is law to be had, people will have their own.
Vil. 'Tis very fit they ſhould; but pray be gone.
To-morrow certainly——— [*Exeunt officers.*
Iſa. What of to-morrow?
Am I then the ſport,
The game of fortune, and her laughing fools?
The common ſpectacle, to be expos'd
From day to day, and baited for the mirth
Of the lewd rabble? muſt I be reſerv'd
For freſh afflictions?
Vil. For long happineſs
Of life, I hope.
Iſa. There is no hope for me.
The load grows light, when we reſolve to bear:
I'm ready for my trial.
Car. Pray be calm,
And know your friends.
Iſa. My friends! have I a friend?
Car. A faithful friend; in your extremeſt need,
Villeroy came in to ſave you——
Iſa. Save me! how?
Car. By ſatisfying all your creditors.
Iſa. Which way? For what?
Vil. Let me be underſtood,
And then condemn me: you have giv'n me leave
To be your friend; and in that only name,
I now appear before you. I could wiſh
There had been no occaſion for a friend,
Becauſe I know you hate to be oblig'd;
And ſtill more loth to be oblig'd by me.
Iſa. 'Twas that I would avoid——— [*Aſide.*
Vil. I'm moſt unhappy, that my ſervices
Can be ſuſpected to deſign upon you:
I have no farther ends than to redeem you
From fortune's wrongs; to ſhew myſelf at laſt,
What I have long profeſs'd to be, your friend:
Allow me that; and to convince you more,
That I intend only your intereſt;

Forgive

Forgive what I have done, and in amends
(If that can make you any that can pleaſe you)
I'll tear myſelf for ever from my hopes;
Stifle this flaming paſſion in my ſoul,
That has ſo long broke out to trouble you;
And mention my unlucky love no more.
Iſa. This generoſity will ruin me. [*Aſide.*
Vil. Nay, if the bleſſing of my looking on you
Diſturbs your peace, I will do all I can
To keep away, and never ſee you more.
Car. You muſt not go.
Vil. Could Iſabella ſpeak
Thoſe few ſhort words, I ſhould be rooted here,
And never move but upon her commands.
Car. Speak to him, ſiſter, do not throw away
A fortune that invites you to be happy.
In your extremity he begs your love;
And has deſerv'd it nobly. Think upon
Your loſt condition, helpleſs and alone.
Tho' now you have a friend, the time muſt come
That you will want one; him you may ſecure
To be a friend, a father, and a huſband to you.
Iſa. A huſband!
Car. You have diſcharg'd your duty to the dead,
And to the living; 'tis a wilfulneſs
Not to give way to your neceſſities,
That force you to this marriage.
Nurſe. What muſt become of this poor innocent?
[*To the child.*
Car. He wants a father to protect his youth,
And rear him up to virtue: you muſt bear
The future blame, and anſwer to the world,
When you refuſe the eaſy, honeſt means,
Of taking care of him.
Nurſe. Of him and me,
And every one that muſt depend upon you;
Unleſs you pleaſe now to provide for us,
We muſt all periſh.
Car. Nor would I preſs you——
Iſa. Do not think I need
Your reaſons, to confirm my gratitude:
I have a ſoul that's truly ſenſible

Of your great worth, and buſy to contrive, [*To Vil.*
If poſſible, to make you a return.
Vil. O! eaſily poſſible!
Iſa. It cannot be your way. My pleaſures are
Bury'd, and cold in my dead husband's grave:
And I ſhould wrong the truth, myſelf, and you,
To ſay that I can ever love again.
I owe this declaration to myſelf:
But as a proof that I owe all to you,
If after what I've ſaid, you can reſolve
To think me worth your love—Where am I going?
You cannot think it; 'tis impoſſible.
Vil. Impoſſible!
Iſa. You ſhould not ask me now, nor ſhould I grant,
I am ſo much oblig'd, that to conſent
Would want a name to recommend the gift;
'Twould ſhew me poor, indebted, and compell'd,
Deſigning, mercenary; and I know
You would not wiſh to think I could be bought.
Vil. Be bought! where is the price that can pretend
To bargain for you? Not in fortune's power.
The joys of heav'n and love muſt be beſtow'd:
They are not to be ſold, and cannot be deſerv'd.
Iſa. Some other time I'll hear you on this ſubject.
[*Going.*
Vil. Nay, then there is no time ſo fit for me.
[*Following her.*
Since you conſent to hear me, hear me now;
That you may grant: you are above
The little forms which circumſcribe your ſex:
We differ but in time, let that be mine.
Iſa. You think fit
To get the better of me, and you ſhall;
Since you will have it ſo——I will be yours.
Vil. I take you at your word.
Iſa. I give you all,
My hand; and would I had a heart to give:
But if it ever can return again,
'Tis wholly yours.
Vil. O ecſtacy of joy!
Leave that to me. If all my ſervices,
If proſperous days, and kind indulging nights;
If all that man can fondly ſay, or do,

Can

Can beget love, love ſhall be born again.
O Carlos! now my friend, and brother too:
And nurſe, I have eternal thanks for thee.
Send for the prieſt———; [*Nurſe goes out in haſte.*
This night you muſt be mine.
Let me command in this, and all my life
Shall be devoted to you.
Iſa. On your word,
Never to preſs me to put off theſe weeds,
Which beſt become my melancholy thoughts,
You ſhall command me.
Vil. Witneſs heav'n and earth
Againſt my ſoul, when I do any thing
To give you a diſquiet.
Car. I long to wiſh you joy.
Vil. You'll be a witneſs of my happineſs.
Car. For once I'll be my ſiſter's father,
And give her to you.
Vil. Next to my Iſabella,
Be near my heart: I am for ever yours. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE, *Count* Baldwin's *houſe.*

Enter Count BALDWIN, *and* CARLOS.

Count BALDWIN.

MARRIED to Villeroy, ſay'ſt thou!
Car. Yes, my Lord.
Laſt night the prieſt perform'd his holy office,
And made 'em one.
C. *Bald.* Misfortune join 'em!
And may her violated vows pull down
A laſting curſe, a conſtancy of ſorrow
On both their heads——I have not yet forgot
Thy ſlighted paſſion, the refus'd alliance;

But

But having her, we are reveng'd at full,
Heav'n will purſue her ſtill, and Villeroy
Share the judgments ſhe calls down.

Car. Soon he'll hate her;
Tho' warm and violent in his raptures now;
When full enjoyment palls his ſicken'd ſenſe,
And reaſon with ſatiety returns,
Her cold conſtrain'd acceptance of his hand,
Will gall his pride, which (tho' of late o'erpower'd
By ſtronger paſſions) will, as they grow weak,
Riſe in full force, and pour its vengeance on her.

C. *Bald.* Now, Carlos, take example to thy aid;
Let Biron's diſobedience, and the curſe
He took into his boſom, prove a warning,
A monitor to thee to keep thy duty
Firm, and unſhaken.

Car. May thoſe rankling wounds
Which Biron's diſobedience gave my father,
Be heal'd by me!

C. *Bald.* With tears I thank thee, Carlos——
And may'ſt thou ever feel thoſe inward joys,
Thy duty gives thy father——But, my ſon,
We muſt not let reſentment choak our juſtice:
'Tis fit that Villeroy know he has no claim
From me, in right of Iſabella—Biron,
(Whoſe name brings tears) when wedded to this woman,
By me abandon'd, ſunk the little fortune
His uncle left, in vanity and fondneſs:
I am poſſeſt of thoſe your brother's papers,
Which now are Villeroy's, and ſhould aught remain,
In juſtice it is his; from me to him
You ſhall convey them—follow me and take 'em.

[*Exit* C. Bald.

Car. Yes, I will take 'em; but ere I part with 'em,
I will be ſure my intereſt will not ſuffer
By theſe his high, refin'd fantaſtic notions,
Of equity and right.—What a paradox
Is man! my father here, who boaſts his honour,
And ev'n but now was warm in praiſe of juſtice,
Can ſteel his heart againſt the widow's tears,
And infant's wants; the widow and the infant

Of

Of Biron; of his ſon, his fav'rite ſon.
'Tis ever thus weak minds, who court opinion,
And dead to virtuous feelings, hide their wants
In pompous affectation—Now to Villeroy—
Ere this his friends (for he is much belov'd)
Croud to his houſe, and with their nuptial ſongs
Awake the wedded pair, I'll join the throng,
And in my face, at leaſt, bear joy and friendſhip.
[*Exit.*

SCENE, *A hall in* Villeroy's *houſe: A band of muſic, with the friends of* Villeroy.

Enter a Servant.

1ſt Fr. Where is your maſter, my good friend?
Ser. Within, Sir,
Preparing for the welcome of his friends.
1ſt Fr. Acquaint him we are here: yet ſtay,
The voice of muſic gently ſhall ſurpriſe him,
And breathe our ſalutations to his ear.
Strike up the ſtrain to Villeroy's happineſs,
To Iſabella's—but he's here already.

Enter VILLEROY.

Vil. My friends, let me embrace you:—
Welcome all——
What means this preparation? [*Seeing the muſic.*
1ſt. Fr. A ſlight token
Of our beſt wiſhes for your growing happineſs—
You muſt permit our friendſhip—
Vil. You oblige me—
1ſt Fr. But your lovely bride,
That wonder of her ſex, ſhe muſt appear,
And add new brightneſs to this happy morning.
Vil. She is not yet prepar'd; and let her will,
My worthieſt friend determine her behaviour:
To win, and not to force her diſpoſition,
Has been my ſeven years' taſk. She will anon,
Speak welcome to you all: the muſic ſtays.
[Villeroy *and his friends ſeat themſelves.*

EPITHA-

EPITHALAMIUM.

AIR. Miss Young.

" Let all, let all be gay,
" Begin the rapt'rous lay,
" Let mirth, let mirth and joy
" Each happy hour employ,
" Of this fair bridal day."

AIR. Mr Beard.

" Ye love-wing'd hours, your flight,
" Your downy flight prepare,
" Bring ev'ry ſoft delight
" To ſooth the brave and fair.
" Hail, happy pair, thus in each other bleſt.
" Be ever free from care, of ev'ry joy poſſeſt."

I thank you for this proof of your affection,
I am ſo much tranſported with the thoughts
Of what I am, I know not what I do.
My Iſabella! but poſſeſſing her,
Who would not loſe himſelf?—You'll pardon me:
Oh! there was nothing wanting to my ſoul,
But the kind wiſhes of my loving friends—
But our collation waits; where's Carlos now,
Methinks I am but half myſelf without him.

2d Fr. This is wonderful! married a night and a day, and yet in raptures.

Vil. Oh! when you all get wives, and ſuch as mine,
(If ſuch another woman can be found)
You will rave too, doat on the dear content,
And prattle in their praiſe, out of all bounds;
I cannot ſpeak my bliſs! 'Tis in my head,
'Tis in my heart, and takes up all my ſoul—
The labour of my fancy. You'll pardon me,
About ſome twelve months hence I may begin
To ſpeak plain ſenſe—Walk in and honour me.

Enter

Enter ISABELLA.

My Iſabella! O, the joy of my heart.
That I have leave at laſt to call you mine;
When I give up that title to the charms
Of any other wiſh, be nothing mine;
But let me look upon you, view you well.
This is a welcome gallantry indeed.
I durſt not ask, but it was kind to grant,
Juſt at the time: diſpenſing with your dreſs
Upon our bridal-day.

Iſa. Black might be ominous;
I would not bring ill luck along with me.

Vil. Oh! if your melancholy thoughts could change
With ſhifting of your dreſs—Time has done cures
Incredible this way, and may again.

Iſa. I cou'd have wiſh'd, if you had thought it fit,
Our marriage had not been ſo public.

Vil. Do not you grudge me my exceſs of love:
That was a cauſe it could not be conceal'd:
Beſides 'twould injure the opinion
I have of my good fortune, having you;
And leſſen it in other people's thoughts,
Buſy on ſuch occaſions to enquire,
Had it been private.

Iſa. I have no more to ſay.

Enter CARLOS.

Vil. My Carlos too, who came in to the ſupport
Of our bad fortune, has an honeſt right,
In better times, to ſhare the good with us.

Car. I come to claim that right, to ſhare your joy;
To wiſh you joy; and find it in myſelf;
For a friend's happineſs reflects a warmth,
A kindly comfort, into every heart
That is not envious.

Vil. He muſt be a friend,
Who is not envious of a happineſs
So abſolute as mine; but if you are
(As I have reaſon to believe you are)

Concern'd

Concern'd for my well-being, there's the cauſe:
Thank her for what I am, and what muſt be.

[*Muſic flouriſh.*

I ſee you mean a ſecond entertainment,
My deareſt Iſabella, you muſt hear
The rapture of my friends, from thee they ſpring:
Thy virtues have diffus'd themſelves around,
And made them all as happy as myſelf.

Iſa. I feel their favours with a grateful heart,
And willingly comply.

RECIT.

" Take the bleſſing Gods intend ye;
" Grateful meet the proffer'd joy:
" Truth and honour ſhall attend ye,
" Charms that ne'er can change or cloy."

DUETTO. Mr Beard.

" O the raptures of poſſeſſing,
" Taking beauty to thy arms:"

Miſs Young.

" O the joy, the laſting bleſſing,
" When with virtue beauty charms!

Mr Beard.

" Purer flames ſhall gently warm ye;"

Miſs Young.

" Love and honour both ſhall charm thee."

BOTH.

" O the raptures" of, *&c. &c.*

CHORUS.

" Far from hence be care and ſtrife,
" Far, each pang that tortures life!
" May the circling minutes prove
" One ſweet round of peace and love!"

Car. You'll take my advice another time, ſiſter.

Vil. What have you done? a riſing ſmile
Stole from her thoughts, juſt red'ning on her cheek,
And you have daſh'd it.

Car. I am ſorry for't.

Vil. My friends, will you forgive me, when I own
I muſt prefer her peace to all the world?
Come, Iſabella, let us lead the way:
Within we'll ſpeak our welcome to our friends,
And crown the happy feſtival with joy. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *A room.*

Enter SAMPSON *and* NURSE.

Samp. Ay, marry, Nurſe, here's a maſter in earneſt; he'll double our wages for us! If he comes on as faſt with my lady as he does with his ſervants, we are all in the way to be well pleas'd.

Nurſe. He's in a rare humour; if ſhe be in as good a one——

Samp. If ſhe be, marry, we may e'en ſay, they have begot it upon one another.

Nurſe. Well; why don't you go back again to your old Count? You thought your throat cut, I warrant you, to be turn'd out of a nobleman's ſervice.

Samp. For the future, I will never ſerve in a houſe where the maſter or miſtreſs of it lie ſingle: they are out of humour with every body, when they are not pleas'd themſelves. Now, this matrimony makes every thing go well: there's mirth, and money ſtirring about, when thoſe matters go as they ſhould do.

Nurſe. Indeed, this matrimony, Sampſon——

Samp. Ah! Nurſe, this matrimony is a very good thing.—And now as my lady is married, I hope we ſhall have company come to the houſe: there's ſomething always coming from one gentleman or other upon thoſe occaſions, if my lady loves company.

Nurſe. Odſo, my maſter! we muſt not be ſeen.

[*Exit.*

Enter VILLEROY *with a letter, and* ISABELLA.

Vil. I muſt away this moment—ſee his letter,
Sign'd by himſelf: alas! he could no more;
My brother's deſperate and cannot die
In peace, but in my arms.

Iſa. So ſuddenly!

Vil. Suddenly taken, on the road to Bruſſels,
To do us honour, love; unfortunate!
Thus to be torn from thee, and all thoſe charms,
Tho' cold to me and dead.

Iſa. I'm ſorry for the cauſe.

Vil. O! could I think,
Could I perſuade myſelf that your concern
For me, or for my abſence, were the ſpring,
The fountain of theſe melancholy thoughts,
My heart would dance, ſpite of the ſad occaſion,
And be a gay companion in my journey;
But———

Enter CARLOS *from ſupper.*

My good Carlos' why have you left my friends?

Car. They are departed home.
They ſaw ſome ſudden, melancholy news,
Had ſtolen the lively colour from your cheek—
You had withdrawn, the bride alarm'd had follow'd,
Mere ceremony had been conſtraint; and this
Good natur'd rudeneſs———

Vil. Was the more obliging.
There, Carlos, is the cauſe. [*Gives the letter.*

Car. Unlucky accident!
Th' archbiſhop of Malines, your worthy brother,
With him to night? ſiſter, will you permit it?

Vil. It muſt be ſo.

Iſa.

Iſa. You hear it muſt be ſo.
Vil. Oh, that it muſt!
Car. To leave your bride ſo ſoon!——
Vil. But having the poſſeſſion of my love,
I am the better able to ſupport
My abſence, in the hopes of my return.
Car. Your ſtay will be but ſhort?
Vil. It will ſeem long!
The longer that my Iſabella ſighs:
I ſhall be jealous of this rival, grief,
That you indulge, and fondle in my abſence.
It takes ſo full poſſeſſion of thy heart;
There is not room enough for mighty love.

Enter Servant, and bows.

My horſes wait: farewell, my love! You, Carlos,
Will act a brother's part, till I return,
And be the guardian here. All, all I have
That's dear to me, I give up to your care.
Car. And I receive her as a friend and brother.
Vil. Nay, ſtir not, love; for the night air is cold,
And the dews fall—here be our end of parting;
Carlos will ſee me to my horſe. [*Exit with* Carlos.
Iſa. O, may thy brother better all our hopes!
A ſullen melancholy bakes my blood;
Forgive me, Villeroy——I do not find
That cheerful gratitude thy ſervice aſks:
Yet if I know my heart, and ſure I do,
'Tis not averſe from honeſt obligation,
I'll to my chamber, and to bed; my mind,
My haraſs'd mind, is weary. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE, *the ſtreet.*

BIRON *and* BELLFORD, *juſt arrived.*

BIRON.

THE longeſt day will have an end: we are got home at laſt.

Bel. We have got our legs at liberty; and liberty is home, wherever we go: though mine lies moſt in England.

Bir. Pray let me call this yours: for what I can command in Bruſſels, you ſhall find your own. I have a father here, who, perhaps, after ſeven years abſence, and coſting him nothing in my travels, may be glad to ſee me. You know my ſtory—How does my diſguiſe become me?

Bel. Juſt as you would have it; 'tis natural, and will conceal you.

Bir. To-morrow you ſhall be ſure to find me here, as early as you pleaſe. This is the houſe; you have obſerv'd the ſtreet.

Bel. I warrant you; I han't many viſits to make, before I come to you.

Bir. To-night I have ſome affairs that will oblige me to be private.

Bel. A good bed is the privateſt affair that I deſire to be engag'd in to-night; your directions will carry me to my lodgings. [*Exit.*

Bir. Good night, my friend. [*Knocks.*

The long expected moment is arriv'd!
And if all here be well, my paſt ſorrows
Will only heighten my exceſs of joy,
And nothing will remain to wiſh or hope for!

BIRON.

BIRON *knocks again,* SAMPSON *enters to him,*

Samp. Who's there? what would you have?

Bir. Is your lady at home, friend?

Samp. Why, truly, friend, it is my employment to anſwer impertinent queſtions: but for my lady's being at home, or no, that's juſt as my lady pleaſes.

Bir. But how ſhall I know, whether it pleaſes her or no?

Samp. Why, if you'll take my word for it, you may carry your errand back again; ſhe never pleaſes to ſee any body at this time of night, that ſhe does not know, and by your dreſs and appearance, I am ſure, you muſt be a ſtranger to her.

Bir. But I have buſineſs; and you don't know how that may pleaſe her.

Samp. Nay, if you have buſineſs, ſhe is the beſt judge, whether your buſineſs will pleaſe her or no; therefore I will proceed in my office, and know of my lady, whether or no ſhe is pleas'd to be at home or no———[*Going.*

Enter NURSE *to them.*

Nurſe. Who's that you are ſo buſy withal? methinks you might have found out an anſwer in fewer words: but, Sampſon, you love to hear yourſelf prate ſometimes, as well as your betters, that I muſt ſay for you. Let me come to him; who would you ſpeak with, ſtranger?

Bir. With you, miſtreſs, if you can help me to ſpeak to your lady.

Nurſe. Yes, Sir, I can help you in a civil way: but can nobody do your buſineſs but my lady?

Bir. Not ſo well; but if you'll carry her this ring; ſhe'll know my buſineſs better.

Nurſe. There's no love letter in it, I hope?—You look like a civil gentleman:—in an honeſt way I may bring you an anſwer. [*Exit* Nurſe.

Bir. My old Nurſe, only a little older! they ſay the tongue grows always: mercy on me! then her's is ſeven years longer, ſince I left her. Yet there's ſome-

thing in theſe ſervants' folly pleaſes me: the cautious conduct of a family appears, and ſpeaks in their impertinence. Well, miſtreſs—

NURSE *returns.*

Nurſe. I have deliver'd your ring, Sir;—pray Heav'n you bring no bad news along with you.

Bir. Quite contrary, I hope.

Nurſe. Nay, I hope ſo too? but my lady was very much ſurpriz'd when I gave it her. Sir, I am but a ſervant, as a body may ſay; but if you'll walk in, that I may ſhut the doors, for we keep very orderly hours; I can ſhow you into the parlour, and help you to an anſwer, perhaps, as ſoon as thoſe that are wiſer. [*Exit.*

Bir. I'll follow you—
Now all my ſpirits hurry to my heart,
And every ſenſe has taken the alarm
At this approaching interview!
Heav'ns how I tremble! [*Exit into the houſe.*

SCENE, *a Chamber.*

Enter ISABELLA.

Iſa. I've heard of witches, magic ſpells, and charms,
That have made nature ſtart from her old courſe:
The ſun has been eclips'd, the moon drawn down
From her career, ſtill paler, and ſubdu'd
To the abuſes of this under world:
Now I believe all poſſible. This ring,
This little ring with necromantic force,
Has rais'd the ghoſt of pleaſure to my fears:
Conjur'd the ſenſe of honour, and of love,
Into ſuch ſhapes, they fright me from myſelf:
I dare not think of them——
I'll call you when I want you. [*Servant goes out.*

Enter NURSE.

Nurſe. Madam, the gentleman's below.

Iſa. I had forgot; pray let me ſpeak with him.
[*Exit* Nurſe.

This ring was the firſt preſent of my love
To Biron, my firſt huſband: I muſt bluſh
To think I have a ſecond: Biron died
(Still to my loſs) at Candy; there's my hope.
O! do I live to hope that he died there!
It muſt be ſo: he's dead; and this ring left
By his laſt breath, to ſome known faithful friend,
To bring me back again.

[Biron *introduc'd*.——Nurſe *retires*.

That's all I have to truſt to——
My fears were woman's: I have view'd him all:
And let me, let me ſay it to myſelf,
I live again, and riſe but from his tomb.

Bir. Have you forgot me quite?

Iſa. Forgot you!

Bir. Then farewell my diſguiſe, and my misfortunes.
My Iſabella!

[*He goes to her, ſhe ſhrieks, and falls in a ſwoon.*

Iſa. Ha!

Bir. O! come again:
Thy Biron ſummons thee to life and love;
Once I had charms to wake thee:
Thy once-lov'd, ever loving huſband calls——
Thy Biron ſpeaks to thee.

Iſa. My huſband! Biron?

Bir. Exceſs of love and joy, for my return,
Has overpower'd her——I was to blame
To take thy ſex's ſoftneſs unprepar'd;
But ſinking thus, thus dying in my arms,
This ecſtaſy has made my welcome more
Than words could ſay: words may be counterfeit,
Falſe coin'd, and current only from the tongue,
Without the mind; but paſſion's in the ſoul,
And always ſpeaks the heart.

Iſa. Where have I been? Why do you keep him from me?
I know his voice: my life upon the wing,
Hears the ſoft lure that brings me back again:
'Tis he himſelf, my Biron, the dear man!
My true-lov'd huſband! do I hold you faſt,
Never to part again? can I believe it?
Nothing but you could work ſo great a change.

There's

There's more than life itſelf in dying here:
If I muſt fall, 'tis welcome in theſe arms.
Bir. Live ever in theſe arms.
Iſa. But pardon me,
Excuſe the wild diſorder of my ſoul:
The ſtrange, ſurpriſing joy of ſeeing you,
Of ſeeing you again, diſtracted me——
Bir. Thou everlaſting goodneſs!
Iſa. Anſwer me:
What hand of providence has brought you back
To your own home again? O ſatisfy
Th' impatience of my heart: I long to know
The ſtory of your ſufferings. You would think
Your pleaſures ſufferings, ſo long remov'd
From Iſabella's love: but tell me all,
For every thought confounds me.
Bir. My beſt life; at leiſure, all.
Iſa. We thought you dead; kill'd at the ſiege of Candy.
Bir. There I fell among the dead;
But hopes of life reviving from my wounds,
I was preſerv'd, but to be made a ſlave:
I often writ to my hard father, but never had
An anſwer. I writ to thee too——
Iſa. What a world of woe
Had been prevented, in but hearing from you!
Bir. Alas! thou could'ſt not help me.
Iſa. You do not know how much I could ha' done;
At leaſt, I'm ſure I could have ſuffer'd all:
I would have ſold myſelf to ſlavery,
Without redemption; giv'n up my child,
The deareſt part of me, to baſeſt wants——
Bir. My little boy!
Iſa. My life, but to have heard
You were alive—which now too late I find. [*Aſide.*
Bir. No more, my love, complaining of the paſt,
We looſe the preſent joy. 'Tis over price
Of all my pains, that thus we meet again——
I have a thouſand things to ſay to thee——
Iſa. Would I were paſt the hearing. [*Aſide.*
Bir. How does my child, my boy, my father too?
I hear he's living ſtill.

Iſa.

Isa. Well both, both well;
And may he prove a father to your hopes,
Though we have found him none.

Bir. Come, no more tears.

Isa. Seven long years of sorrow for your loss,
Have mourn'd with me——

Bir. And all my days behind
Shall be employ'd in a kind recompence
For thy afflictions——Can't I see my boy?

Isa. He's gone to bed; I'll have him brought to you.

Bir. To-morrow I shall see him; I want rest
Myself, after my weary pilgrimage,

Isa. Alas! what shall I get for you?

Bir. Nothing but rest, my love! To-night I would not
Be known, if possible, to your family:
I see my nurse is with you; her welcome
Would be tedious at this time;
To-morrow will do better.

Isa. I'll dispose of her, and order every thing
As you would have it.

Bir. Grant me but life, good heav'n, and give the means
To make this wond'rous goodness some amends;
And let me then forget her, if I can!
O! she deserves of me much more than I
Can lose for her, though I again could venture
A father, and his fortune, for her love.
You wretched fathers, blind as fortune all!
Not to perceive that such a woman's worth
Weighs down the portions you provide your sons:
What has she, in my absence, undergone?
I must not think of that; it drives me back
Upon myself, the fated cause of all.

ISABELLA *returns.*

Isa. I have obey'd your pleasure;
Every thing is ready for you.

Bir. I can want nothing here; possessing thee,
All my desires are carried to their aim

Of

Of happineſs; there's no room for a wiſh,
But to continue ſtill this bleſſing to me:
I know the way, my love, I ſhall ſleep ſound.
Iſa. Shall I help to undreſs you?
Bir. By no means:
I've been ſo long a ſlave to others' pride,
To learn, at leaſt, to wait upon myſelf;
You'll make haſte after——— [*Goes in.*
Iſa. I'll but ſay my prayers, and follow you——
My prayers! no, I muſt never pray again.
Prayers have their bleſſings to reward our hopes:
But I have nothing left to hope for more.
What heav'n could give, I have enjoy'd; but now
The baneful planet riſes on my fate,
And what's to come is a long line of woe;
Yet I may ſhorten it——
I promis'd him to follow him——him!
Is he without a name? Biron, my huſband:
To follow him to bed—my huſband! ha!
What then is Villeroy? But yeſterday
That very bed receiv'd him for its lord;
Yet a warm witneſs of my broken vows.
O Biron! hadſt thou come but one day ſooner,
I would have follow'd thee through beggary,
Through all the chances of this weary life,
Wander'd the many ways of wretchedneſs
With thee, to find a hoſpitable grave;
For that's the only bed that's left me now. [*Weeping.*
——What's to be done?—for ſomething muſt be done.
Two huſbands! yet not one! by both enjoy'd,
And yet a wife to neither! hold, my brain—
This is to live in common! Very beaſts,
That welcome all they meet, make juſt ſuch wives.
My reputation! O, 'twas all was left me;
The virtuous pride of an uncenſur'd life;
Which, the dividing tongues of Biron's wrongs,
And Villeroy's reſentments, tear aſunder,
To gorge the throats of the blaſpheming rabble.
This is the beſt of what can come to-morrow,
Beſides old Baldwin's triumph in my ruin:

I cannot

I cannot bear it———
Therefore no morrow: ha? a lucky thought
Works the right way to rid me of 'em all;
All the reproaches, infamies, and ſcorns,
That every tongue and finger will find for me.
Let the juſt horror of my apprehenſions
But keep me warm———no matter what can come.
'Tis but a blow—yet I will ſee him firſt—
Have a laſt look to heighten my deſpair,
And then to reſt forever———

BIRON *meets her.*

Bir. Deſpair! and reſt for ever! Iſabella!
Theſe words are far from thy condition;
And be they ever ſo. I heard thy voice,
And could not bear thy abſence: come, my love!
You have ſtaid long, there's nothing, nothing ſure,
Now to deſpair of in ſucceeding fate.
Iſa. I am contented to be miſerable,
But not this way; I've been too long abus'd,
And can believe no more;
Let me ſleep on, to be deceiv'd no more.
Bir. Look up, my love, I never did deceive thee,
Nor ever can; believe thyſelf, thy eyes
That firſt inflam'd, and lit me to my love,
Thoſe ſtars, that ſtill muſt guide me to my joys.
Iſa. And me to my undoing: I look round
And find no path, but leading to the grave.
Bir. I cannot underſtand thee.
Iſa. My good friends above,
I thank 'em, have at laſt found out a way
To make my fortune perfect, having you,
need no more; my fate is finiſh'd here.
Bir. Both our ill fates, I hope.
Iſa. Hope is a lying, fawning flatterer,
That ſhews the fair ſide only of our fortunes,
To cheat us eaſier into our fall;
A truſted friend, who only can betray you;
Never believe him more—If marriages

Are

Are made in heav'n, they ſhould be happier;
Why was I made this wretch?

Bir. Has Marriage made thee wretched?

Iſa. Miſerable, beyond the reach of comfort.

Bir. Do I live to hear thee ſay ſo?

Iſa. Why! what did I ſay?

Bir. That I have made thee miſerable.

Iſa. No—You are my only earthly happineſs;
And my falſe tongue bely'd my honeſt heart,
If it ſaid otherwiſe.

Bir. And yet you ſaid
Your marriage made you miſerable.

Iſa. I know not what I ſaid:
I've ſaid too much, unleſs I could ſpeak all.

Bir. Thy words are wild; my eyes, my ears, my heart,
Were all ſo full of thee, ſo much employed
In wonder of thy charms, I could not find it:
Now I perceive it plain——

Iſa. You'll tell no body—— [*Diſtractedly.*

Bir. Thou art not well.

Iſa. Indeed I am not; I knew that before:
But where's the remedy?

Bir. Reſt will relieve thy cares: come, come, no more;
I'll baniſh ſorrow from thee.

Iſa. Baniſh firſt the cauſe.

Bir. Heav'n knows how willingly.

Iſa. You are the only cauſe.

Bir. Am I the cauſe, the cauſe of thy misfortunes?

Iſa. The fatal innocent cauſe of all my woes.

Bir. Is this my welcome home? this the reward
Of all my miſeries, long labours, pains,
And pining wants of wretched ſlavery,
Which I've out-liv'd, only in hopes of thee!
Am I thus paid at laſt for deathleſs love?
And call'd the cauſe of thy misfortunes now?

Iſa. Enquire no more; 'twill be explain'd too ſoon.
[*She is going off.*

Bir. What! canſt thou leave me too?

[*He ſtays her.*

Iſa. Pray let me go:
For both our ſakes permit me——

Bir. Rack me not with imaginations
Of things impoſſible. Thou canſt not mean
What thou haſt ſaid—Yet ſomething ſhe muſt mean.
—'Twas madneſs all—Compoſe thyſelf, my love!
The fit is paſt; all may be well again:
Let us to bed.

Iſa. To bed! you've rais'd the ſtorm
Will ſever us for ever: O my Biron!
While I have life I ſtill muſt call you mine;
I know I am, and always was unworthy
To be the happy partner of your love;
And now muſt never, never ſhare it more.
But, Oh! if ever I was dear to you,
As ſometimes you have thought me; on my knees,
(The laſt time I ſhall care to be believ'd)
I beg you, beg to think me innocent,
Clear of all crimes, that thus can baniſh me
From this world's comforts, in my loſing you.

Bir. Where will this end?

Iſa. The rugged hand of fate has got between
Our meeting hearts, and thruſts 'em from their joys:
Since we muſt part——

Bir. Nothing ſhall ever part us.

Iſa. Parting's the leaſt that is ſet down for me:
Heav'n has decreed, and we muſt ſuffer all.

Bir. I know thee innocent; I know myſelf ſo:
Indeed we both have been unfortunate;
But ſure misfortunes ne'er were faults in love.

Iſa. Oh! there's a fatal ſtory to be told;
Be deaf to that, as heav'n has been to me!
And rot the tongue that ſhall reveal my ſhame:
When thou ſhalt hear how much thou haſt been wrong'd,
How wilt thou curſe thy fond believing heart,
Tear me from the warm boſom of thy love,
And throw me like a pois'nous weed away:
Can I bear that? bear to be curſt and torn,

And thrown out from thy family and name,
Like a diſeaſe? Can I bear this from thee?
I never can: no, all things have their end.
When I am dead, forgive and pity me. [*Exit.*

Bir. Stay, my Iſabella———
What can ſhe mean? theſe doubtings will diſtract me:
Some hidden miſchief ſoon will burſt to light;
I cannot bear it!———I muſt be ſatisfy'd———
'Tis ſhe, my wife, muſt clear this darkneſs to me.

She ſhall—if the ſad tale at laſt muſt come,
She is my fate, and beſt can ſpeak my doom. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter BIRON, Nurſe *following him.*

BIRON.

I Know enough: th' important queſtion
Of life or death, fearful to be reſolv'd,
Is clear'd to me: I ſee where it muſt end;
And need enquire no more—Pray let me have
Pen, Ink, and paper, I muſt write a while,
And then I'll try to reſt——to reſt! for ever.
[*Exit* Nurſe.
Poor Iſabella! now I know the cauſe,
The cauſe of thy diſtreſs, and cannot wonder
That it has turn'd thy brain. If I look back
Upon thy loſs, it will diſtract me too.
O, any curſe but this might be remov'd;
But 'twas the rancorous malignity
Of all ill ſtars combin'd, of heaven and fate——
Hold, hold my impious tongue—alas! I rave:

Why

Why do I tax the ſtars, or heav'n, or fate?
They are all innocent of driving us
Into deſpair; they have not urg'd my doom:
My father and my brother are my fates,
That drive me to my ruin. They knew well
I was alive; too well they knew how dear
My Iſabella—O my wife no more!
How dear her love was to me—yet they ſtood,
With a malicious ſilent joy, ſtood by,
And ſaw her give up all my happineſs,
The treaſure of her beauty to another;
Stood by, and ſaw her married to another!
O cruel father! and unnatural brother!
Shall not I tell you that you have undone me?
I have but to accuſe you of my wrongs,
And then to fall forgotten.—Sleep or death
Sits heavy on me, and benumbs my pains:
Either is welcome; but the hand of death
Works always ſure, and beſt can cloſe my eyes.

[*Exit* Biron.

Enter NURSE *and* SAMPSON.

Nurſe. Here's ſtrange things towards, Sampſon: what will be the end of 'em, do you think?

Samp. Nay, marry, Nurſe, I can't ſee ſo far; but the law, I believe, is on Biron, the firſt huſband's ſide.

Nurſe. Yes; no queſtion, he has the law on his ſide.

Samp. For I have heard, the law ſays, a woman muſt be a widow, all out ſeven years, before ſhe can marry, according to law.

Nurſe. Ay, ſo it does; and our lady has not been a widow altogether ſeven years.

Samp. Why then, Nurſe, mark my words, and ſay I told you ſo; the man muſt have his mare again, and all will do well.

Nurſe. But if our maſter Villeroy comes back again——

Samp. Why, if he does, he is not the firſt man that has had his wife taken from him.

Nurſe. For fear of the worſt, will you go to the old Count, deſire him to come as ſoon as he can; there may be miſchief, and he is able to prevent it.

Samp. Now you ſay ſomething, now I take you, Nurſe; that will do well indeed: miſchief ſhould be prevented; a little thing will make a quarrel, when there's a woman in the way. I'll about it inſtantly——

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *drawn, ſhews* Biron *aſleep on a couch.*

ISABELLA *comes in to him.*

Iſa. Aſleep ſo ſoon! Oh happy thou!
Who thus canſt ſleep—I never ſhall ſleep more.
If then to ſleep be to be happy, he
Who ſleeps the longeſt is the happieſt;
Death is the longeſt ſleep? Oh! have a care,
Miſchief will thrive apace. Never wake more.
[*To* Biron.
If thou didſt ever love thy Iſabella,
To-morrow muſt be the dooms-day to thy peace.
——The ſight of him diſarms even death itſelf.
——The ſtarting tranſport of new quick'ning life
Gives juſt ſuch hopes; and pleaſures grow again
With looking on him———Let me look my laſt——
But is a look enough for parting love?
Sure I may take a kiſs——Where am I going!
Help, help me, Villeroy!——Mountains and ſeas
Divide your love, never to meet my ſhame.

[*Throws herſelf upon the floor; after a ſhort pauſe, ſhe raiſes herſelf upon her elbow.*

What will this battle of the brain do with me!
This little ball, this ravag'd province, long
Cannot maintain—The globe of earth wants room
And food for ſuch a war—I find I'm going—
Famine, plagues, and flames,

Wide

Wide waſte and deſolation, do your work!
Upon the world, and then devour yourſelves.
—The ſcene ſhifts faſt——[*She riſes.*] and now 'tis better with me;
Conflicting paſſions have at laſt unhing'd
The great machine; the ſoul itſelf ſeems chang'd;
Oh, 'tis a happy revolution here!
The reas'ning faculties are all depos'd;
Judgment, and underſtanding, common ſenſe,
Driv'n out, as traitors to the public peace,
Now I'm reveng'd upon my memory,
Her ſeat dug up, where all the images
Of a long miſ-ſpent life, were riſing ſtill,
To glare a ſad reflection of my crimes,
And ſtab a conſcience thro' 'em: you are ſafe,
You monitors of miſchief! what a change!
Better and better ſtill! this is the infant ſtate
Of innocence, before the birth of care.
My thoughts are ſmooth as the Elyſian plains,
Without a rub: the drowſy falling ſtreams
Invite me to their ſlumbers.
Wou'd I were landed there—— [*Sinks into a chair*]
What noiſe was that! a knocking at the gate!
It may be Villeroy——No matter who.

Bir. Come, Iſabella, come——

[Biron *in a dream.*

Iſa. Hark, I am call'd.
Bir. You ſtay too long from me.
Iſa. A man's voice! in my bed! how came he there?

[*Riſes.*

Nothing but villany in this bad world;
Coveting neighbours goods, or neighbours wives;
Here's phyſick for your fever.

[*Draws a dagger, and goes backwards to the couch.*

Breathing a vein is the old remedy.
Where do they go that ſend 'em?—This to try.

[*Juſt going to ſtab him, he riſes, ſhe knows him and ſhrieks.*

What do I ſee!

Bir. Iſabella! arm'd!

Iſa. Againſt my husband's life!
Who, but the wretch, moſt reprobate to grace,
Deſpair e'er hard'ned for damnation,
Could think of ſuch a deed! murder my husband!

Bir. Thou didſt not think it.

Iſa. Madneſs has brought me to the gates of hell,
And there has left me. O, the frightful change
Of my diſtractions! or, is this interval
Of reaſon, but to aggravate my woes;
To drive the horror back with greater force
Upon my ſoul, and fix me mad for ever?

Bir. Why doſt thou fly me ſo?

Iſa. I cannot bear his ſight; diſtraction, come,
Poſſeſs me all, and take me to thyſelf;
Shake off thy chains, and haſten to my aid;
Thou art my only cure——like other friends,
He will not come to my neceſſities;
Then I muſt go to find the tyrant out;
Which is the neareſt way?

[*Running out.*

Bir. Poor Iſabella, ſhe's not in a condition
To give me any comfort, if ſhe could:
Loſt to herſelf—as quickly I ſhall be
To all the world——horrors come faſt around me;
My mind is overcaſt—the gath'ring clouds
Darken the proſpect—I approach the brink,
And ſoon muſt leap the precipice! O, heav'n!
While yet my ſenſes are my own, thus kneeling
Let me implore thy mercies on my wife,
Releaſe her from her pangs; and if my reaſon,
O'erwhelm'd with miſeries, ſink before the tempeſt,
Pardon thoſe crimes, deſpair may bring upon me.

[*Riſes.*

Enter Nurse.

Nurſe. Sir, there's ſomebody at the door muſt needs ſpeak with you; he won't tell his name.

Bir.

Bir. I come to him———

[*Exit* Nurſe.

'Tis Bellford, I ſuppoſe; he little knows
Of what has happen'd here; I wanted him,
Muſt employ his friendſhip, and then———

[*Exit.*

SCENE *changes to the Street.*

CARLOS *enters with three ruffians.*

Car. A younger brother! I was one too long,
Not to prevent my being ſo again———
We muſt be ſudden—Younger brothers are
But lawful baſtards of another name;
Thruſt out their nobility of birth
And family, and tainted into trades:
Shall I be one of them? bow, and retire,
To make more room for the unwieldy heir
To play the fool in! no——
But how I ſhall prevent it; Biron comes
To take poſſeſſion of my father's love;
Would that were all! there is a birth-right too
That he will ſeize—beſides, if Biron lives,
He will unfold ſome practices, which I
Cannot well anſwer——therefore he ſhall die;
This night muſt be diſpos'd of: I have means
That will not fail my purpoſe—here he comes.

Enter BIRON.

Bir. Ha! am I beſet? I live but to revenge me.

[*They ſurround him fighting:* Villeroy *enters with two ſervants, they reſcue him;* Carlos *and his party fly.*

Vil. How are you, Sir? mortally hurt, I fear,
Take care and lead him in.

Bir. I thank you for the goodneſs, Sir, tho' 'tis
Beſtow'd upon a very wretch; and death,

Tho'

Tho' from a villain's hand, had been to me
An act of kindneſs, and the height of mercy.—
But I thank you, Sir. [*He is led in.*

SCENE *changes to the inſide of the houſe.*

Enter ISABELLA.

Iſa. Murder my huſband! O! I muſt not dare
To think of living on; my deſp'rate hand,
In a mad rage, may offer it again;
Stab any where but there. Here's room enough
In my own breaſt, to act the fury in,
The proper ſcene of miſchief. Villeroy comes;
Villeroy and Biron come: O! hide me from 'em——
They rack, they tear; let 'em carve out my limbs,
Divide my body to their equal claims:
My ſoul is only Biron's; that is free,
And thus I ſtrike for him, and liberty.

[*Going to ſtab herſelf,* Villeroy *runs in and prevents her, by taking the dagger from her.*

Vil. Angels defend and ſave thee!
Attempt thy precious life! the treaſury
Of nature's ſweets! life of my little world!
Lay violent hands upon thy innocent ſelf!

Iſa. Swear I am innocent, and I'll believe you:
What would you have with me? pray let me go.
—Are you there, Sir? you are the very man
Have done all this——You would have made
Me believe you married me; but the fool
Was wiſer, I thank you: 'tis not all goſpel
You men preach upon that ſubject.

Vil. Doſt thou not know me?

Iſa. O, yes, very well. [*Staring on him.*
You are the widow's comforter, that marries
Any woman when her huſband's out of the way:
But I'll never, never take your word again.

Vil.

Vil. I am thy loving husband.

Isa. I have none; no husband —— [*Weeping.*
Never had but one, and he dy'd at Candy,
Did he not? I'm sure you told me so: you,
Or somebody, with just such a lying look
As you have now: speak, did he not die there?

Vil. He did, my life!

Isa. But swear it, quickly swear.

BIRON *enters bloody, and leaning upon his sword.*

Before that screaming evidence appears,
In bloody proof against me——

[*She seeing* Biron, *swoons into a chair;* Villeroy *helps her.*

Vil. Help there; Nurse, where are you?
Ha! I am distracted too!

[*Going to call for help, sees* Biron.
Biron alive!

Bir. The only wretch on earth that must not live.

Vil. Biron or Villeroy must not, that's decreed.

Bir. You've sav'd me from the hands of murderers;
Would you had not, for life's my greatest plague,
And then, of all the world, you are the man
I would not be oblig'd to——Isabella!
I came to fall before thee: I had dy'd
Happy, not to have found your Villeroy here:
A long farewell, and a last parting kiss.

[*Kisses her.*

Vil. A kiss! confusion! it must be your last.

[*Draws.*

Bir. I know it must——here I give up that death
You but delay'd: since what is past has been
The work of fate, thus we must finish it:
Thrust home, be sure—— [*Faints.*

Vil. Alas! he faints! some help there.

Bir. 'Tis all in vain, my sorrows soon will end.
O Villeroy! let a dying wretch entreat you,
To take this letter to my father—My Isabella!
Could'st thou but hear me, my last words should bless thee.

I cannot,

I cannot, tho' in death, bequeath her to thee;
——[*To* Villeroy.
But could I hope my boy, my little one,
Might find a father in thee—O, I faint!
I can no more—Hear me, heav'n! O! ſupport
My wife, my Iſabella—Bleſs my child!
And take a poor, unhappy—— [*Dies.*

Vil. He's gone:—let what will be the conſequence,
I'll give it him. I have involv'd myſelf,
And would be clear'd; that muſt be thought on now.
My care of her is loſt in wild amaze.
[*Going to* Iſabella.
Are you all dead within there? where, where are you?
[*Exit.*

ISABELLA *comes to herſelf.*

Iſa. Where have I been?—Methinks I ſtand upon
The brink of life, ready to ſhoot the gulph
That lies between me and the realms of reſt:
But, ſtill detain'd, I cannot paſs the ſtrait;
Deny'd to live, and yet I muſt not die:
Doom'd to come back, like a complaining ghoſt,
To my unbury'd body——Here it lies——
[*Throws herſelf by* Biron's *body.*
My body, ſoul, and life. A little duſt,
To cover our cold limbs in the dark grave——
There, there we ſhall ſleep ſafe and ſound together.

Enter VILLEROY *with ſervants.*

Vil. Poor wretch! upon the ground! ſhe's not herſelf:
Remove her from the body.
[*Servants going to raiſe her.*
Iſa. Never, never:
You have divorc'd us once, but ſhall no more.
Help, help me. Biron: ha! bloody and dead!
O, murder! murder! you have done this deed!
Vengeance! and murder! bury us together;

Do

Do any thing but part us.
Vil. Gently, gently raiſe her——
She muſt be forc'd away.

She drags the body after her. They get her into their arms, and carry her off.

Iſa. O, they tear me! cut off my hands——
Let me leave ſomething with him,
They'll claſp him faſt——
O cruel, cruel men!
Thus you muſt anſwer one day.
Vil. Good Nurſe, take care of her: [*Nurſe follows her.*
Send for all helps: all, all that I am worth,
Shall cheaply buy her peace of mind again.
Be ſure you do [*To a ſervant.*
Juſt as I order'd you. The ſtorm grows loud—
[*Knocking at the door.*
I am prepar'd for it; now let them in.

Enter Count BALDWIN, CARLOS, BELLFORD, *Friends, with ſervants.*

C. *Bald.* O, do I live to this unhappy day!
Where is my wretched ſon?
Car. Where is my brother?
[*They ſee him, and gather round the body.*
Vil. I hope in heav'n.
Car. Canſt thou pity him?
Wiſh him in heav'n! when thou haſt done a deed,
That muſt for ever cut thee from the hopes
Of ever coming there.
Vil. I do not blame you——
You have a brother's right to be concern'd
For his untimely death——
Car. Untimely death, indeed!
Vil. But yet you muſt not ſay, I was the cauſe.
Car. Not you the cauſe! why, who ſhould murder him?
We do not aſk you to accuſe yourſelf;

But I muſt ſay, that you have murder'd him;
And will ſay nothing elſe, till juſtice draws
Upon our ſide, at the loud call of blood,
To execute ſo foul a murderer.

Bel. Poor Biron! is this thy welcome home?

Friend. Riſe, Sir, there is a comfort in revenge,
Which yet is left you. [*To Count* Baldwin.

Car. Take the body hence. [Biron *carry'd off.*

C. *Bald.* What could provoke you?

Vil. Nothing could provoke me
To a baſe murder; which I find you think
Me guilty of. I know my innocence;
My ſervants too can witneſs that I drew
My ſword in his defence, to reſcue him.

Bel. Let the ſervants be call'd.

Fr. Let's hear what they can ſay.

Car. What they can ſay! why, what ſhould ſervants ſay?
They're his accomplices, his inſtruments,
And will not charge themſelves. If they could do
A murder for his ſervice, they can lie,
Lie nimbly; and ſwear hard to bring him off.
You ſay, you drew your ſword in his defence:
Who were his enemies? did he need defence?
Had he wrong'd any one? could he have cauſe
To apprehend a danger, but from you?
And yet you reſcu'd him!—No, no, he came
Unſeaſonably (that was all his crime)
Unluckily to interrupt your ſport:
You were new marry'd—marry'd to his wife;
And therefore you, and ſhe, and all of you,
(For all of you I muſt believe concern'd)
Combin'd to murder him out of the way.

Bel. If it be ſo——

Car. It can be only ſo——

Fr. Indeed it has a face——

Car. As black as hell.

C. *Bald.* The law will do me juſtice: ſend for the magiſtrate.

Car. I'll go myſelf for him—— [*Exit.*

Vil. Theſe ſtrong preſumptions, I muſt own, indeed,
Are violent againſt me; but I have
A witneſs, and on this ſide heav'n too,
——Open that door.

Door opens, and PEDRO *is brought forward by* VILLEROY's *ſervants.*

Here's one can tell you all.

Ped. All, all: ſave me but from the rack, I'll confeſs all.

Vil. You and your accomplices deſign'd
To murder Biron?——Speak!

Ped. We did.

Vil. Did you engage upon your private wrongs,
Or were employ'd?

Ped He never did us wrong.

Vil. You were ſet on then?

Ped. We were ſet on.

Vil. What do you know of me?

Ped. Nothing, nothing:
You ſav'd his life, and have diſcover'd me.

Vil He has acquitted me,
If you would be reſolv'd of any thing,
He ſtands upon his anſwer.

Bel. Who ſet you on to act this horrid deed?

C. *Bald.* I'll know the villain; give me quick his name,
Or I will tear it from thy bleeding heart——

Ped. I will confeſs.

C. *Bald.* Do then.

Ped It was my maſter Carlos, your own ſon.

C. *Bald.* Oh monſtrous! monſtrous! moſt unnatural!

Bel Did he employ you to murder his own brother?

Ped. He did, and he was with us when 'twas done.

C. *Bald.* If this be true, this horrid, horrid tale,
It is but juſt upon me: Biron's wrongs

Muſt be reveng'd; and I the cauſe of all.

Fr. What will you do with him?

C. *Bald.* Take him a part——
I know too much. [Pedro *goes in.*

Vil. I had forgot——your wretched, dying ſon,
Gave me this letter for you. [*Gives it to* Baldwin.
I dare deliver it: if it ſpeaks of me,
I pray to have it read.

C. *Bald.* You know the hand.

Bel. I know 'tis Biron's hand.

C. *Bald.* Pray read it.

Bellford *reads the letter.*

SIR,

I find I am come only to lay my death at your door; I am now going out of the world; but cannot forgive you, nor my brother Carlos, *for not hindering my poor wife* Iſabella *from marrying with* Villeroy: *when you both knew, from ſo many letters, that I was alive.*

BIRON.

Vil. How!—did you know it then?

C. *Bald.* Amazement all!

Enter CARLOS, *with officers.*

O Carlos! are you come? your brother here,
Here, in a wretched letter, lays his death
To you and me: have you done any thing
To haſten his ſad end?

Car. Bleſs me, Sir, I do any thing? Who, I!

C. *Bald.* He talks of letters that were ſent to us!
I never heard of any—Did you know
He was alive?

Car. Alive! heav'n knows, not I.

C. *Bald.* Had you no news of him, from a report,
Or letter, never?

Car. Never, never, I.

Bel. That's ſtrange, indeed: I know he often writ
To lay before you the condition [*To* C. Baldwin.
Of his hard ſlavery; and more I know,
That he had ſeveral anſwers to his letters:
He ſaid, they came from you; you are his brother.

Car. Never from me.

Bel. That will appear.
The letters I believe are ſtill about him;
For ſome of 'em I ſaw but yeſterday.

C. *Bald.* What did thoſe anſwers ſay?

Bel. I cannot ſpeak to the particulars;
But I remember well, the ſum of 'em
Was much the ſame, and all agreed,
That there was nothing to be hop'd from you;
That 'twas your barbarous reſolution,
To let him periſh there——

C. *Bald.* O Carlos! Carlos! hadſt thou been a brother——

Car. This is a plot upon me; I never knew
He was in ſlavery, or was alive,
Or heard of him, before this fatal hour.

Bel. There, Sir, I muſt confront you:
He ſent you a letter, to my knowledge, laſt night;
And you ſent him word you would come to him——
I fear you came too ſoon.

C. *Bald.* 'Tis all too plain.——
Bring out that wretch before him. [Pedro *produc'd.*

Car. Ha! Pedro there!—Then I am caught indeed.

Bel. You ſtart at ſight of him;
He has confeſt the bloody deed.

Car. Well then, he has confeſt,
And I muſt anſwer it.

Bel. Is there no more?

Car. Why?—what would you have more? I know the worſt,
And I expect it.

C. *Bald.* Why haſt thou done all this?

Car. Why, that which damns moſt men, has ruin'd me,

The making of my fortune. Biron ſtood
Between me and your favour; while he liv'd,
I had not that: hardly was thought a ſon,
And not at all a-kin to your eſtate.
I could not bear a younger brother's lot,
To live depending upon courteſy——
Had you provided for me like a father,
I had been ſtill a brother.

C. *Bald.* 'Tis too true,
I never lov'd thee, as I ſhould have done:
It was my ſin, and I am puniſh'd for't.
Oh! never may diſtinction riſe again
In families: let parents be the ſame
To all their children; common in their care,
And in their love of 'em—I am unhappy,
For loving one too well.

Vil. You knew your brother liv'd; why did you take
Such pains to marry me to Iſabella?——

Car. I had my reaſons for't——

Vil. More than I thought you had.

Car. But one was this——
I knew my brother lov'd his wife ſo well,
That if he ever ſhould come home again,
He could not long out-live the loſs of her.

Bel. If you rely'd on that, why did you kill him?

Car. To make all ſure. Now you are anſwer'd all.
Where muſt I go? I am tir'd of your queſtions.

C. *Bald.* I leave the judge to tell thee what thou art;
A father cannot find a name for thee.
But parricide is higheſt treaſon ſure
To ſacred nature's law; and muſt be ſo,
So ſentenc'd in thy crimes. Take him away——
The violent remedy is found at laſt,
That drives thee out, thou poiſon of my blood,
Infected long, and only foul in thee. [Carlos *led off.*
Grant me, ſweet heav'n! thy patience to go thro'
The torment of my cure—Here, here begins
The operation—Alas! ſhe's mad.

Enter

Enter ISABELLA *distracted, held by her women: her hair dishevelled; her little son running in before, being afraid of her.*

Vil. My Isabella! poor unhappy wretch!
What can I say to her?
Isa. Nothing, nothing; 'tis a babbling world—
I'll hear no more on't. When does the court sit?
I'll not be bought—what! to sell innocent blood!
You look like one of the pale judges here,
Minos, or Radamanth, or Æacus——
I have heard of you.
I have a cause to try, an honest one;
Will you not hear it? Then I must appeal
To the bright throne——Call down the heav'nly pow'rs
To witness how you use me.
Wom. Help, help, we cannot hold her.
Vil. You but enrage her more.
C. *Bald.* Pray give her way; she'll hurt no body.
Isa. What have you done with him? he was here but now;
I saw him here. Oh Biron, Biron! where,
Where have they hid thee from me? he is gone—
But here's a little flaming cherubin——
Child. O save me, save me! [*Running to* Baldwin.
Isa. The mercury of heav'n, with silver wings,
Imp'd for the flight, to overtake his ghost,
And bring him back again.
Child. I fear she'll kill me.
C. *Bald.* She will not hurt thee. [*She flings away.*
Isa. Will nothing do! I did not hope to find
Justice on earth; 'tis not in heav'n neither.
Biron has watch'd his opportunity——
Softly; he steals it from the sleeping gods,
And sends it thus——
[*Stabs herself.*
Now, now I laugh at you, defy you all,
You tyrant murderers.

Vil.

Vil. Call, call for help: O heav'n! this was too much.

C. *Bald.* O, thou moſt injur'd innocence! yet live,
Live but to witneſs for me to the world,
How much I do repent me of the wrongs,
Th' unnatural wrongs, which I have heap'd on thee,
And have pull'd down this judgment on us all.

Vil. O ſpeak, ſpeak but a word of comfort to me.

C. *Bald.* If the moſt tender father's care and love
Of thee, and thy poor child, can make amends—
O yet look up, and live.

Iſa. Where is that little wretch?

[*They raiſe her.*

I die in peace, to leave him to your care,
I have a wretched mother's legacy,
A dying kiſs——Pray let me give it him,
My bleſſing; that, that's all I have to leave thee.
O may thy father's virtues live in thee,
And all his wrongs be bury'd in my grave.

[*Dies.*

Vil. She's gone, and all my joys of life with her.
Where are your officers of juſtice now?
Seize, bind me, drag me to the bloody bar:
Accuſe, condemn me; let the ſentence reach
My hated life—No matter how it comes,
I'll think it juſt, and thank you as it falls.
Self-murder is deny'd me: elſe, how ſoon
Could I be paſt the pain of my remembrance!
But I muſt live, grow grey with ling'ring grief,
To die at laſt in telling this ſad tale.

C. *Bald.* Poor wretched orphan of moſt wretched parents!
'Scaping the ſtorm, thou'rt thrown upon a rock,
To periſh there; the very rocks would melt,
Soften their nature, ſure, to foſter thee:
I find it by myſelf. My flinty heart,
That barren rock, on which thy father ſtarv'd,
Opens its ſprings of nouriſhment to thee:
There's not a vein but ſhall run milk for thee:

O, had I pardon'd my poor Biron's fault!
His firſt, his only fault—this had not been.

To erring youth there's ſome compaſſion due;
But while with rigour you their crimes purſue,
What's their misfortune, is a crime in you.
Hence learn, offending children to forgive:
Leave puniſhment to heav'n—'tis heav'n's prerogative.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

O had I pardon'd my poor Biron's fault!
His first, his only fault—this had not been.

To string vouth there's more compassion due;
But while with rigour [illegible] crimes pursue,
What's their misfortune [illegible] crime in you.
Hence learn, offenders [illegible] to forgive:
Learn pardon'd [illegible] 'tis heav'n's prerogative.

[Exeunt omnes.

1763